

SOI TEMPLATE LAYER

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

15 [0001] This invention relates in general to semiconductor circuits and in particular to semiconductor on insulator fabrication.

Description of the Related Art

20 [0002] For some applications, it is desirable to produce a layer of strained silicon over an insulator such as with a semiconductor on insulator (SOI) configuration. A strained silicon layer is a layer of silicon whose lattice spacing is larger than a lattice spacing (e.g. 5.43 Å) of natural silicon (e.g. relaxed silicon crystal). One example of a strained silicon spacing is 5.4843 Å for 1% tensile strain. A strained silicon layer may provide for a greater mobility of electrons and holes than a layer of relaxed silicon crystal.

25 [0003] One method of forming a strained silicon layer is to form a layer of silicon on a template layer having a lattice spacing larger than that of natural silicon crystal. The resultant silicon formed (e.g. by epitaxial deposition) on top of the template layer is stressed to provide a larger lattice spacing.

30 [0004] Figure 1 shows a prior art wafer 101 in an example of a SOI substrate configuration that includes a silicon germanium (SiGe) layer 103 located on an insulating layer 105 (e.g. silicon dioxide). Insulating layer 105 is located on layer 107.

[0005] Referring to Figure 2, to increase the content of germanium in a template layer and thereby increase its lattice spacing, layer 103 is subject to an oxidation process to enrich the amount of germanium in the bottom portion 205 of layer 103. The top portion is oxidized to form SiO₂ layer 203. During the oxidation process, germanium atoms from the top portion of layer 103 are injected into portion 205 and diffuse throughout 205. In one example, the oxidation process involves heating wafer 101 as high as 1200 C in an atmosphere containing oxygen gas with an inert gas (e.g. Argon or N₂) as a dilutant.

[0006] The resulting SiO₂ layer 203 is then removed (e.g. by etching). A layer of silicon is then grown (e.g. epitaxially) on layer 205. Because layer 205 has a larger lattice spacing, the top silicon layer will be under tensile biaxial stress to provide a larger lattice spacing than with naturally occurring silicon crystal.

[0007] One problem with this process is that template layer 205 is not fully relaxed in that the lattice spacing does not fully correspond to a crystal having the percentage of germanium that layer 205 has. Accordingly, not all injected germanium atoms are on lattice sites, the layer is stressed by the underlying insulating layer 105, and the interstitial germanium and silicon atoms or layer 205 are prone to form defects.

[0008] Figure 3 shows a two dimensional view of a lattice 301 of silicon germanium crystal having smaller lattice spacing than a relaxed silicon germanium crystal having the same germanium content. Interstitial germanium atoms (e.g. 305) and interstitial silicon atoms (e.g. 311) are shown in Figure 3 located between lattice sites (e.g. 313 and 315). These interstitial atoms may cause extended defects in the silicon germanium template layer and in a subsequently formed strained silicon layer.

[0009] What is needed is an improved method for forming a template layer.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010] The present invention may be better understood, and its numerous objects, features, and advantages made apparent to those skilled in the art by referencing the accompanying drawings.

[0011] Figure 1 is a partial side view of a prior art wafer.

[0012] Figure 2 is a partial side view of a prior art wafer.

[0013] Figure 3 is a partial two dimensional view of a prior art template layer lattice.

[0014] Figure 4 is partial side view of a wafer during a stage in its manufacture according to one embodiment of the present invention.

5 [0015] Figure 5 is a partial two dimensional view of a template layer lattice according to the present invention.

[0016] Figure 6 is partial side view of a wafer during another stage in its manufacture according to one embodiment of the present invention.

10 [0017] Figure 7 is partial side view of a wafer during a stage in its manufacture according to another embodiment of the present invention.

[0018] Figure 8 is partial side view of a wafer during a stage in its manufacture according to another embodiment of the present invention.

[0019] Figure 9 is partial side view of a wafer during a stage in its manufacture according to another embodiment of the present invention.

15 [0020] Figure 10 is partial side view of a wafer during a stage in its manufacture according to one embodiment of the present invention.

[0021] The use of the same reference symbols in different drawings indicates identical items unless otherwise noted.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

20 [0022] The following sets forth a detailed description of a mode for carrying out the invention. The description is intended to be illustrative of the invention and should not be taken to be limiting.

[0023] It has been discovered that providing a process for injecting vacancies in a layer of template layer material formed over an insulating layer allows for germanium (or other crystal

lattice spacing modifying species) atoms to occupy lattice sites of a template layer, thereby increasing the effective lattice spacing of the crystal lattice of the template layer.

[0024] Figure 4 is a partial side view of a wafer after the wafer has been subjected to a nitridation process according to the present invention. Wafer 401 includes an insulating layer 405 made of e.g. silicon oxide located over a layer 407. Layer 407 is made of silicon germanium, but may be made of other materials e.g. poly silicon, mono silicon, amorphous silicon, glass, or quartz. Insulating layer 405 maybe made by forming a silicon germanium layer and then implanting oxygen into the silicon germanium layer followed by annealing to form insulating layer 405. The structure shown in Figure 4 may also be formed by bonding a second wafer including SiGe to layer 405 and then cutting a portion of the second wafer, leaving a layer of silicon germanium on insulating layer 405. Such a layer of silicon germanium would have a greater thickness than layer 403 as shown in Figure 4. In other embodiments, insulating layer 405 may extend to the bottom of the wafer.

[0025] Layer 409 is a layer of silicon nitride that was grown by subjecting the layer of silicon germanium (not shown) on layer 405 to a nitridation process. In one embodiment, the nitridation process involves flowing ammonia (NH_3) over the silicon germanium layer on insulating layer 405 at an elevated temperature. The nitrogen in ammonium reacts with the silicon of the silicon germanium layer to grow the silicon nitride layer 409, thereby reducing the silicon germanium layer to the thickness of silicon germanium layer 403 as shown in Figure 4. During the nitridation process, vacancies are being injected into the remaining portion (layer 403) of the silicon germanium layer and diffused throughout layer 403. A vacancy is space in a lattice site void of an atom. Also during the nitridation process, germanium atoms from the top portion of the silicon germanium layer are being injected into the remaining portion (layer 403) of the silicon germanium layer. These germanium atoms recombine with the vacancies of layer 403 becoming substitutional. Also interstitial germanium (as well as silicon) atoms recombined with the vacancies becoming substitutional.

[0026] Vacancies are injected into layer 403 by the silicon atoms in a lattice of layer 403 propagating upward to combine with the nitrogen of the ammonia to form silicon nitride layer 409. Because the germanium is not reactive with the ammonia, the germanium atoms are injected by diffusion into the lattice of the remaining silicon germanium layer 403.

[0027] Figure 5 shows an example of a silicon germanium lattice 501. Lattice 501 includes vacancies 503 and 505. During the nitridation process, germanium atoms (e.g. interstitial germanium atom 507) recombine with vacancies (e.g. 503) to fill the lattice structure.

5 [0028] Referring back to Figure 4, nitride layer 409 is stripped by an etching selective to silicon germanium layer 403. Layer 403 is used as a template layer for a subsequent application of strained epitaxial silicon layer (see layer 1009 of Figure 10).

[0029] Injecting vacancies into a template layer may render existing interstitial atoms substitutional in the crystal lattice of the template layer. This reduces the number of
10 interstitial atoms in the template layer thereby reducing the defect density of the template layer. Also injecting vacancies into a template layer may allow a reconstruction of the interface between the insulating layer 405 and template layer 403 thereby allowing for a higher degree of relaxation of template layer 403.

[0030] In other embodiments, other processes may be utilized for injecting vacancies into
15 template layer material. For example, the layer of silicon germanium template layer material located on layer 405 may be subjected to a silicide process where metal (e.g. titanium) is deposited on the template layer material and reacts (when heated) with the silicon of the template layer material to form a layer of a silicon titanium compound (at the location approximately of layer 409 as shown in Figure 4). During the silicide process, vacancies are
20 injected into the remaining portion of the silicon germanium template layer material (e.g. layer 403) by the silicon atoms of the remaining portion propagating upward to combine with the titanium to form the titanium silicide layer (e.g. at the location of 409).

[0031] In another embodiment, a template layer material maybe subject to an oxynitride process to enrich the germanium in the template layer and to inject vacancies in the template
25 layer. In one example of a oxynitride process, ammonia and oxygen are flowed across the surface of the template layer material to grow a layer of oxynitride from the layer of template layer material. During the oxynitride process, vacancies are injected into the lower portion of the layer of template material by the silicon atoms in that portion propagating upward to combine with the nitrogen of the ammonia and the oxygen to form a silicon oxynitride layer
30 at the location corresponding to layer 409 of Figure 4. Because the germanium is not reactive

with the ammonia and oxygen, the germanium atoms are injected by diffusion into the silicon germanium lattice of the lower portion of the template layer material (located at the location of layer 403 in Figure 4). The layer of oxynitride is then removed wherein the lower portion (e.g. 403) of the template material is used as the template. In other embodiments, nitric oxide gas (NO) or nitrous oxide gas (N₂O) may be flowed across the surface of the template layer material to grow a layer of oxynitride from the layer of template layer material.

[0032] In another embodiment, a layer of template material may be subject to an oxidation process where a chloride bearing gas (e.g. hydrogen chloride gas (HCl), chlorine gas (Cl₂), carbon tetrachloride gas (CCl₄), or trichloroethane gas (C₂H₃Cl₃)) is introduced with the oxygen to inject germanium atoms and vacancies into the template layer. In one example of such an oxidation process, HCl and oxygen (and in some embodiment argon or nitrogen (N₂) as diluents) are flowed across the layer of template material at 1100 C to grow a layer of silicon oxide on the layer of template material. The silicon oxide layer is located at the location corresponding to layer 403 of Figure 4. The introduction of Cl is believed to increase the oxidation rate of the oxidation process such that vacancies are injected in the layer of template material.

[0033] One further advantage that may occur with the use of an oxidation process with HCl is that the oxidation process may be performed at relatively lower temperatures (e.g. 1050-1100 C in some embodiments) than with a regular oxidation process. Because during an oxidation process, the remaining portion of the layer of template material is enriched with germanium, the melting point of the enriched germanium layer is decreased. Accordingly, the ability to perform oxidation at a lower temperature (1050-1100 C as opposed to 1200C) allows for the oxidation process to be performed and avoid melting of the layer of template material. Furthermore, the ability to perform oxidation at lower temperatures may make the oxidation process easier to integrate with CMOS processes.

[0034] Furthermore, introducing HCl in an oxidation process increases the oxidation rate, thereby decreasing the cycle time needed to perform oxidation. Furthermore, with some embodiments, the HCl does not affect the quality of the grown oxide. Thus, the oxide retains a high selectivity between the oxide and the remaining layer of template material.

[0035] In other embodiments, other materials may be utilized as template layer material such as silicon germanium carbon ($\text{Si}_{1-x-y}\text{Ge}_x\text{C}_y$ where Ge content > C content and $x > y$), Silicon tin (SiSn), Silicon tin germanium (SiSnGe), and germanium carbon (GeC).

[0036] In some embodiments, a post condensation step may be applied to the wafer after the removal of the silicon nitride layer 409 (silicon oxynitride or titanium silicide layer in some embodiments). During the oxidation process, silicon of layer 403 propagates upward to combine with the oxygen to grow a silicon oxide layer 604 (see Figure 6), and thereby consuming a portion of layer 403. Because the germanium is not reactive with oxygen, the germanium atoms are injected by diffusion into the lattice of the remaining portion of layer 403 (layer 603 in Figure 6). Layer 604 is then etched wherein layer 603 is utilized as a template layer. Layer 603 is more strained than layer 403 due to the post oxidation process. In other embodiments, a post oxidation process may be performed after a silicidation or oxynitride process.

[0037] In other embodiments, the performing of a vacancy injecting process may be performed subsequent to a condensation process (e.g. subsequent to the oxidation of the template layer material).

[0038] Figure 7 is a partial cross sectional view of a wafer that has been first subjected to an oxidation process and then a nitridation process to inject vacancies into the template layer. Layers 706 and 709 are formed from a nitridation process of a layer of strained silicon germanium (e.g. similar to layer 205 of Figure 2). The strained silicon germanium layer was formed by an oxidation process where an oxide layer (e.g. 203) was grown on a silicon germanium layer (e.g. 103 of Figure 1). The resultant strained silicon germanium layer (e.g. layer 205) was germanium rich due to the diffusion of germanium atoms into the resultant layer from the consumed portion of the germanium layer. Because the oxidation process is not a vacancy generating process, a portion of the diffused germanium atoms become interstitial in the lattice of the strained silicon germanium layer (e.g. 205). Afterwards, the oxide layer (e.g. 205) is removed. In other embodiments, only a portion of the oxide layer (e.g. 205) is removed.

[0039] During a subsequent nitridation process, a silicon nitride layer 709 is grown from the strained silicon germanium layer (e.g. 205). Vacancies are injected into the remaining

silicon germanium layer 706 by the silicon atoms in a lattice of layer 706 propagating upward to combine with the nitrogen to form silicon nitride layer 709. These vacancies recombine with the interstitial germanium of the germanium rich strained silicon germanium layer 706 to reduce the number of interstitial germanium. Also, germanium atoms of the consumed
 5 portion of the strained silicon germanium (e.g. 205) are injected by diffusion into the lattice of layer 706. Layer 709 is removed and layer 706 is used as a template layer. Because of the injection of vacancies, the resulting layer 706 is less strained than the preceding strained silicon germanium layer (e.g. 205).

[0040] Figures 8 and 9 show a wafer during stages of another vacancy injecting process.

10 In Figure 8, nitrogen (809) is implanted into the top portion 811 of a layer of template material 803 (e.g. SiGe) located over insulating layer 805. In some embodiments, the nitrogen is implanted at doses larger than 10^{13} atoms/cm² and at energies between 10-50 keV. Wafer 801 is then subject to an oxidation process wherein a layer of oxynitride 905 is grown, and vacancies and germanium atoms are injected into the lattice of the bottom portion
 15 907 of layer 803 (See Figure 9). Afterwards, layer 905 is etched where portion 907 serves as the template layer.

[0041] In other embodiments, a layer of template material may be subject to an oxidation process and then a subsequent inert gas post bake process. In one embodiment, a hydrogen post bake process is performed at $T = 900 - 1100$ C for 1-100 min with H₂ gas being flowed
 20 over the SiO₂ layer at a pressure of $PH_2 = 1-100$ Torr. Vacancies are injected into the remaining layer of template material during the inert gas post bake process. In other embodiments, other inert gases such as argon may be used with low oxygen pressure (PO₂).

[0042] Referring to Figure 10, after the formation of a template layer 1003 over insulating layer 1005 (e.g. by a process similar to any one of the processes described above) a layer of
 25 strained silicon 1009 is formed (e.g. epitaxially grown) on template layer 1003. Afterwards, devices such as transistors are formed in strained silicon and template layer. In one embodiment, the channel regions of transistors are formed in the strained silicon layer 1009.

[0043] In other embodiments, a layer of monocrystalline silicon is formed on the insulating layer (e.g. 405). A layer of silicon germanium (or other template material) would

then be formed on the layer of silicon material. During vacancy injecting processes and oxidation processes (in some embodiments), germanium atoms and vacancies would be injected into the silicon layer wherein the silicon layer would serve as a portion of the template layer.

- 5 **[0044]** In one embodiment, a method includes providing a layer having a crystalline structure including silicon atoms and germanium atoms over an insulating layer and performing a vacancy injecting process. The vacancy injecting process injecting germanium atoms and vacancies into the crystalline structure.

- 10 **[0045]** In another embodiment, a method includes providing an insulating layer and a semiconductor layer of template layer material having a crystalline structure over the insulating layer. The crystalline structure comprises atoms of a first type. The method also includes performing a vacancy injecting process to inject vacancies into the crystalline structure. The vacancies recombine with atoms including atoms of a second type.

- 15 **[0046]** In other embodiment, a method includes providing a semiconductor on insulator (SOI) substrate with a top semiconductor layer having a crystalline structure comprising atoms of a first type and a second type. The method also includes forming material on the crystalline structure using a process that consumes atoms of the first type in a way that injects vacancies into the crystalline structure wherein vacancies recombine with atoms including atoms of the second type. The method further includes forming a second semiconductor layer
20 comprising atoms of the first type on the crystalline structure. The second semiconductor layer being characterized as strained.

- 25 **[0047]** In another embodiment, a method includes providing a silicon germanium layer having a crystalline structure over an insulating layer, growing an oxide layer on the crystalline structure, and removing at least a portion of the oxide layer. The method also includes forming a first layer on the crystalline structure, removing the first layer, and forming a silicon layer on the crystalline structure after the removing at least a portion of the oxide layer and the removing the first layer.

[0048] In other embodiment, a method includes providing a silicon germanium layer having a crystalline structure over an insulating layer and growing an oxide layer on the crystalline structure with an oxidation process that includes a chloride bearing gas. The method also includes removing the oxide layer and forming a silicon layer on the crystalline structure after the removing the oxide layer.

[0049] In another embodiment, a method includes providing a silicon germanium layer having a crystalline structure over an insulating layer and growing an oxide layer on the crystalline structure. The method further includes removing the oxide layer, performing an inert gas post bake after the growing the oxide, and forming a silicon layer on the crystalline structure after the removing the oxide layer.

[0050] While particular embodiments of the present invention have been shown and described, it will be recognized to those skilled in the art that, based upon the teachings herein, further changes and modifications may be made without departing from this invention and its broader aspects, and thus, the appended claims are to encompass within their scope all such changes and modifications as are within the true spirit and scope of this invention.